

Message Text

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ACTION OPIC-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 AID-05 L-03 IGA-02

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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STATE PASS OPIC FOR BETTY BERG; TREASURY; USDOC; AID

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV SY

SUBJ: VISIT OF OPIC EXEC VP GREGG

REF: DAMASCUS 1118

1. SUMMARY: IN MARCH 3 MEETING BETWEEN OPIC EXEC VP GREGG AND SYRIAN MINISTER OF ECONOMY IMADI, LATTER SAID SARG VERY INTERESTED IN NEGOTIATING OPIC BILATERAL AGREEMENT. IMADI REQUESTED FURTHER SAMPLES OF OPIC AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND GREGG PROMISED HAVE HIS OFFICE (BETTY BERG) SEND OUT REQUESTED COPIES (LISTED BELOW UNDER ACTIONS, PARA 4). END SUMMARY.

2. DURING VISIT OF SECRETARY SIMON MARCH 3, EMBASSY ARRANGED APPOINTMENT WITH MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FOREIGN TRADE DR MOHAMMAD AL-IMADI FOR OPIC EXECUTIVE VP DAVID GREGG III, USDOC ASST SEC REED, AND DEP ASST SEC DR HOSTLER (SEPTTEL). ATTENDING WITH MIN IMADI WERE HIS DEPUTY MINISTERS DR ABDULLAH AZMEH (FOR BANKING AND FINANCE), DR AMMAL JAMMAL (FOR FOREIGN TRADE), DAMASCUS FAIR DIRECTOR HAFEZ, AND IMADI'S ASSISTANT IN CHARGE OF OPIC AFFAIRS, MR ANTOINE SABE'.

3. MR GREGG FULLY REVIEWED PURPOSES OF OPIC PROGRAM AND RESPONDED TO IMADI'S SEVERAL QUESTIONS. IMADI NOTED SARG ALREADY HAD ESTABLISHED INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE (MIN ECON, MIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FINANCE, AND MIN FOREIGN AFFAIRS) TO RESPOND TO EMBASSY NOTE RE

OPIC DISCUSSIONS PRIOR TO FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS (DAMASCUS 452; GREGG HAS COPY OF NOTE AND OTHER BACKGROUND MATERIAL RE EMBASSY EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD). IMADI KEENLY INTERESTED IN OPIC PROMOTION OF OVERSEAS INVESTMENT AND 7,000-COMPANY MAILING LIST MENTIONED BY GREGG. IMADI SAID HIS GOVERNMENT VERY INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING OPIC AGREEMENT AND IN PRINCIPLE HE WANTS TO SIGN SUCH AN AGREEMENT (DEP PM FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS M HAMMAD HAYDAR INFORMED SECRETARY SIMON IN SEPARATE MEETING THAT SARG GIVING "POSITIVE STUDY" TO OPIC AGREEMENT.)

4. ACTION REQUESTED:

A. IMADI REQUESTED FURTHER SAMPLES OF OPIC AGREEMENTS AND HE AND GREGG AGREED ON OPIC PROVIDING IMADI (VIA AIR POUCH TO EMBASSY, ATTENTION ECONOMIC OFFICER) COPIES OF AGREEMENTS WITH YUGOSLAVIA, EGYPT, MAURITANIA, SUDAN, MOROCCO, TUNISIA, AND OMAN (IF LAST NAMED HAS BEEN SIGNED AND IS AVAILABLE). OPIC PLEASE POUCH SOONEST COPIES OF THESE AGREEMENTS (WITH ARABIC TEXTS IF AVAILABLE) EXCEPT FOR SUDAN AND EGYPT, COPIES OF WHICH WE ALREADY HAVE. IMADI HAS BEEN GIVEN STANDARD AGREEMENT TEXT IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC AND GREGG PROVIDED HIM WITH TEXT OF MINOR CHANGE IN PARA 2 OF STANDARD TEXT.

B. OPIC TO PUT EMBASSY ON MAILING LIST FOR "TOPICS." NEWSLETTER, FOUR (4) COPIES WHICH WE WILL DISTRIBUTE HERE.

5. FULL UNCLEARED MEMCON BEING POUCHED NEA/ARN FOR DISTRIBUTION TO OPIC/GREGG AND USDOC.

6. COMMENT: MEETING PROVIDED EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE IMPORTANT PUSH TO OUR EFFORTS TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS ON OPIC BILATERAL. NEXT STEP WILL BE TO PROVIDE IMADI AND INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE WITH PROMISED TEXTS OF OTHER OPIC AGREEMENTS AND THEN OBTAIN DETAILED SYRIAN REACTIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CABLING TO OPIC. FOLLOWING THIS EXCHANGE, WE EXPECT TO BE IN POSITION TO OBTAIN SYRIAN AGREEMENT TO INVITING OPIC NEGOTIATOR TO DAMASCUS FOR FINAL NEGOTIATIONS. AS WAS EVIDENT FROM IMADI'S QUESTIONS AND ALSO FROM OUR EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER USG/SARG BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS (PL 480, AID) AS DISCUSSED BETWEEN EMBASSY AND GREGG, OPIC NEGOTIATOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROBABLY WILL HAVE TO BE HERE FOR TWO WEEKS AT MINIMUM GIVEN SYRIAN LACK OF EXPERIENCE DURING SEVEN-YEAR BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH OUR VARIOUS BILATERAL PROGRAMS AND NEED FOR ARABIC/ENGLISH ORAL AND WRITTEN TRANSLATION WHICH SLOWS DOWN NEGOTIATIONS.

7. FYI: IMADI EXPECTS TO BE IN WASHINGTON AROUND MARCH 21 FOR IBRD MEETING. END FYI. GREGG MENTIONED NEED FOR STATE DEPT

CLEARANCE FOR OPIC BILATERAL AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS. STATE
PLEASE CONFIRM WE HAVE SUCH CLEARANCE NOW TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIA-
TIONS, WITH UNDERSTANDING THAT FINAL AGREED FORMAL TEXT WOULD HAVE
TO PROCEED VIA USUAL AND APPROPRIATE CIRCULAR 175 CLEARANCES.
MURPHY

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